

GENUINE Forgiveness Leads to Unity in the Body

FORGIVENESS is the release of resentment or anger or the action or process of forgiving or being forgiven.

FORGIVENESS is a divine exchange between humanity and God; our offense for God's peace.

UNITY is the state of being united or joined as a whole.

We cannot have one without the other.

- **Does genuine forgiveness mean genuine reconciliation? – Absolutely!**

Genesis 3:21 – Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin and clothed them.

*Even in God's judgment for Adam and Eve He still showed genuine forgiveness and that He cared for them.

*From the beginning forgiveness was God's plan with Jesus being the biggest part of that plan.

*God's forgiveness is a gift. *What you have been freely given, you should freely give to others.

Matthew 6:14-15 says For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

*If we are going to forgive like Jesus forgives us, we have to treat the person like the situation never happened.

- **When we genuinely forgive, do we have to go back to the same relationship or accept the same behaviors from the offender? Absolutely!**

Matthew 18:21-22 Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times? Jesus said to him, I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

*The goal is to forgive and implement unity. If by some chance the relationship is compromised again, we are required to genuinely forgive each time as if it never happened.

*God does not run out on us when we commit the same behaviors over and over again.

1 Corinthians 12:25 – That there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. (Schism means separation or alienation causing divisions among Christians).

If we do not restore the right relationship, then we promote division, separation, and alienation. Restoring the relationship is a part of the reconciliation process.

*God does not separate, alienate or divide Himself from us.

Colossians 3:13 says bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

*We should show the same disposition and the same readiness to forgive our offending brethren, as Christ showed towards us.

- **Is genuine forgiveness important for the spiritual health of those who have been victimized? Absolutely!**

Ephesians 4:31-32 – Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

Romans 5:8 – But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Galatians 5:22-23 – But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

*Forgiveness is not mentioned as one of the fruit of the Spirit, but it is impossible to genuinely forgive someone if you do not bear the fruit. Each fruit plays a part in aiding us to genuinely forgive.

See Philipians 2:1-9 – Relationships are important

2 Corinthians 2:1-11 says - But I determined this within myself, that I would not come again to you in sorrow. For if I make you sorrowful, then who is he who makes me glad but the one who is made sorrowful by me? And I wrote this very thing to you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow over those from whom I ought to have joy, having confidence in you all that my joy is *the joy* of you all. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you. But if anyone has caused grief, he has not grieved me, but all of you to some extent—not to be too severe. This punishment which *was inflicted* by the majority *is* sufficient for such a man, so that,

on the contrary, you *ought* rather to forgive and comfort *him*, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow. Therefore I urge you to reaffirm *your* love to him. For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. Now whom you forgive anything, I also *forgive*. For ^[b]if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

*After we learn to genuinely forgive, genuine unity becomes natural.

John 17:22-23 says And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one. I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

Article of Faith II. The True God.

We believe the Scriptures teach that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is Jehovah, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor confidence and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

*Being unified, just as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are, is what He expects us, as His disciples to be. We, the saints, should be consummated in a perfect union together as a church.